



Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers: A Comprehensive Statewide Model of Care

The Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC) program is a federal initiative launched in 2014, designed to increase access and improve the quality of community mental and substance use disorder treatment services.

CCBHC designation is available to a variety of nonprofit entities; it is not restricted to community mental health centers. Organizations can qualify as CCBHCs either through individual federal grants or as part of a statewide certification process.

CCBHCs must serve all clients regardless of ability to pay and adhere to uniform national data collection requirements focused on outcomes, not outputs, and enable comparisons across facilities and states. They are required to provide a federally defined array of services, either themselves or through partnerships with designated collaborating organizations (DCOs).

There are two CCBHC programs. One is a four-year grant to provider organizations; the other provides an enhanced federal match to qualifying state Medicaid programs for four years. In spring 2024, the state CCBHC opportunity was made a permanent part of the federal Medicaid program. For a state to qualify, they must first apply for a planning grant to explain how they will transition to CCBHC. Awarded a planning grant in late 2024, Colorado is currently exploring how the CCBHC model can benefit communities and individuals needing behavioral health services while simultaneously strengthening the provider network across the state.

These services include:

- Crisis mental health services
- Screening, assessment, and diagnosis
- Patient-centered treatment planning
- Outpatient mental health and substance use disorder services.
- Primary care screening and monitoring
- Targeted case management
- Psychiatric rehabilitation services
- Peer support services and family support services
- Services for members of the armed services and

CCBHC meshes perfectly with the recommendations of Colorado's Behavioral Healthcare Transformation Task Force and the goals of the new Behavioral Health Administration:

- CCBHC criteria put the patient at the center of care and require clinics to demonstrate tangible improvements in access and outcomes.
- Its requirements mirror provider definitions in HB 22-1278 and the legislation's call for new value-based payment models.
- Because a demonstration grant will apply to the entire state and a range of entities can qualify as CCBHCs, it will reinforce Colorado's steps toward a more coordinated system of behavioral healthcare.

CCBHC Impacts in Colorado:

- A November 2022 analysis of data collected from five Colorado CCBHCs between Jan. 2019 and Sept. 2022 showed dramatic improvements for the patients involved:
 - Nearly 50% reduction in psychological distress
 - Over 67% reduction in emergency department use
 - Over 40% improvement in daily functioning
 - Social connectedness, overall health, and quality of life improved on average by over 25%
 - Close to 100% of clients reported stable housing after six months in care
- Aurora Mental Health and Recovery used CCBHC funds to purchase a symptom and care measurement technology that lets patients and clinicians connect more readily on symptoms, goals, and treatments. It has enabled patients to get better faster, with a 56% improvement in symptoms, which in turn improves access as clients can step down into lower levels of care and free up higher-acuity appointments for others who need them. It has also increased satisfaction for both patients and clinicians.
- Clinica Family Health & Wellness, previously known as Mental Health Partners, strengthened their continuum of care by implementing new intensive outpatient programs, expanding integrated care programs, and creating a Community Health Worker (CHW) program. CHWs conduct proactive outreach to engage current and new clients in care and assist them in accessing other needed community supports. In an initial analysis, 54% of clients experienced a decrease in psychiatric distress as a result of MHP's CCBHC-enabled programs.
- North Range Behavioral Health is working to increase same day access to care and enhance services for underserved populations.
- Valley-Wide Health Systems, formerly Southeast Health Group, developed community-specific programs, including specialized services for veterans by creating new county Veterans Services Officers positions in each of their 6 counties. They have also focused outreach for agricultural communities through their local Ag Advisory Council.

Colorado CCBHC Grant Recipients

- **Aurora Mental Health and Recovery** (Arapahoe/Adams counties; grant awarded 5/20)
- **Axis Health System** (central/southwestern slope; grant awarded 9/23)
- **Denver Health** (Denver County; grant awarded 9/22)
- **Jefferson Center for Mental Health** (Jefferson County; grant awarded 9/22)
- **Clinica Family Health & Wellness** (Boulder County; grant awarded 9/18)
- **North Range Behavioral Health** (Weld County; grant awarded 2/21)
- **Solvista Health** (west/south CO; grant awarded 9/22)
- **SummitStone Health Partners** (Larimer County; grant awarded 9/22)

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